

Message Text

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11

ACTION H-01

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R 240455Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9070

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (WOLFF, LESTER) SNAR BM TH

SUBJ: CODEL WOLFF: GUB REACTION

REF: A. RANGOON 191

B. STATE 011517

C. STATE 12467

D. STATE 13374

1. AS INDICATED REFTTEL A, I TOOK OCCASION OF CALL ON DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER U WIN (ON SUBJECT OF SINGLE CONVENTION AMENDING PROTOCOL) JANUARY 23 TO INFORM HIM OF CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S JANUARY 16 PRESS CONFERENCE, AS WELL AS THE SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS OF CONGRESSMEN WOLFF AND MURPHY (REFTTELS B & C). WHILE CALLING HIS ATTENTION TO THE CONGRESSMEN'S REMARKS CRITICAL OF BURMA, I ALSO REMARKED ON CONGRESSMAN MURPHY'S APPARENT APPROVAL OF LAST JUNE'S "BREAK-THROUGH" NARCOTICS CONTROL AGREEMENT BETWEEN US AND GUB, AND BRIEFED U WIN ON DEPARTMENT'S PRESS GUIDANCE (REFTTEL D). WIN SEEMED GENERALLY AWARE OF THE CONGRESSMEN'S ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND AND OF THEIR PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS IN THE U.S.

2. U WIN IS A VERY MILD-MANNERED MAN, AND OFFERED NO EXPLICIT REFUTATION OF CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S CRITICISMS (EXCEPT TO INTER-

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JECT, IN REGARD TO WOLFF'S REFERENCE TO THE THAI PROBLEM IN

DEALING WITH TRAFFICKERS WHO RETREAT TO SANCTUARIES ACROSS THE BORDER IN BURMA, THAT IF ANYBODY IS RETREATING TO SANCTUARIES, IT IS THE BURMESE INSURGENTS WHO SEEK SANCTUARY IN THAILAND). AT THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION, U WIN REMARKED THAT THERE WAS NO POINT IN GETTING UPSET ABOUT THE CONGRESSMEN'S STATEMENTS; LAST YEAR HE HAD BEEN CRITICAL OF HONG KONG AND THAILAND, THIS YEAR HE PRAISED THEM; NEXT YEAR HE WILL BE PRAISING BURMA. NEVERTHELESS, DESPITE HIS SHOW OF NONCHALANCE, WIN WAS CLEARLY GRATIFIED BY THE FORTH-RIGHTNESS OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PRESS GUIDANCE, AND BY MY ASSURANCES THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD A REALISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIVE POWER OF THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE SHAN STATE. EVEN ON THAT BASIS ALONE (I SAID) WE COULD NOT TAKE SERIOUSLY THE HYPOTHETICAL IDEA OF WORKING THROUGH THE SSA, OR ANY OTHER INSURGENT GROUP, ALL OF WHOM ARE SO MUCH WEAKER THAN THE GUB, AND WHO ARE THEMSELVES TRAFFICKERS, TO TRY TO CONTROL THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC.

3. IN URGING UPON WIN THE DESIRABILITY OF EARLY ACTION ON THE SINGLE CONVENTION AMENDING PROTOCOL, I USED THE OBVIOUS LINE THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD HELP TO KEEP THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FROM GETTING A DISTORTED PICTURE OF BURMA'S ANTI-NARCOTICS POSTURE. THIS LINE SEEMED APPROPRIATE AT THE TIME, AND MAY HAVE HELPED TO TURN CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S UNFORTUNATE REMARKS AT LEAST PARTIALLY TO ADVANTAGE. HOWEVER, I AM AFRAID THE IMPACT OF THE CONGRESSMAN'S REMARKS WAS ON THE BALANCE PROBABLY NEGATIVE, SO FAR AS GETTING BURMA TO COOPERATE MORE CLOSELY IN THE NARCOTICS CONTROL FIELD IS CONCERNED. TO NATIONALISTIC BURMESE, EVER CONSCIOUS OF THEIR COLONIAL PAST, THE CONGRESSMAN'S CRITICISMS NOT ONLY ARE UNFAIR AND INACCURATE, BUT ALSO SEEM TO SLIGHT BURMA'S SOVEREIGNTY. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO OUR BEST TO COUNTER THIS UNFORTUNATE IMPRESSION, AND I BELIEVE THE BURMESE WILL CONTINUE PUSHING HARD AGAINST THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. BUT THE CONGRESSMAN'S REMARKS, IN MY OPINION, HAVE NOT HELPED.

OSBORN

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